

Robert Howie

The State of the Question
in the case of
Rev. Dr. Marcus Dods,
being a speech delivered at
the Free Church Synod of
Glasgow and Ayr.

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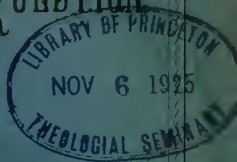
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BY

REV. ROBERT HOWIE, M.A.

(Corrected and Revised.) With APPENDIX.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE accompanying Speech, delivered at the Free Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, has been published, at the urgent request of many who consider that it may be of use in fixing the attention of the Church on the real question that comes up for decision at the ensuing Meeting of the General Assembly. I have yielded the more readily to the pressure thus put on me, because a very meagre report of the discussion appeared in the newspapers, and because that section of the complainants against the judgment of the Presbytery, who have acquiesced in the judgment of the Synod, have now no further opportunity of stating their views at the bar of the General Assembly. Had the decision of the Synod been accepted as final by all parties, I would have considered it unbecoming and ungenerous, thus to revive the discussion of the issues involved in this case. Inasmuch, however, as the appeal taken to the Assembly brings the decision of the Synod under review, I feel it to be right to do what I can to secure that, if there be any alteration of that decision, it shall be only in the way of *formally* reversing the judgment of the Presbytery, as has already been done substantially; and in making it still more manifest that the views contained in the Sermon and Preface are condemned as inconsistent with the Standards of the Church, and that no further action has been taken, simply because the Sermon and Preface, as thus condemned, are held to be withdrawn. For the reasons stated in the Appendix, I have, along with others of those who formerly complained against the judgment of the Presbytery, now acquiesced in the decision of the Synod. I confess, however, that, if the representation given by the Presbytery of that decision could be at all entertained, it would be necessary that a still more emphatic, definite, and unmistakable decision should be given by the General Assembly.

ROBERT HOWIE.



S P E E C H .



I REGRET exceedingly that the duty has been assigned me by my brethren, of making the opening statement for the complainants in this case. Up till lately, I had expected that my old college friend, Mr. Nicoll, now at my side at the bar, who is far better qualified to deal effectively with the momentous issues involved, would have occupied this most responsible position. He has however been prevented, by reasons to which I need not advert, from to-day giving the case the benefit of his powerful advocacy. For myself, I can honestly say that, after all the pain I have already endured in connection with this case, and the heart-burnings and alienations to which it has given rise, I would not have agreed to occupy this prominent position, were it not that my declinature to do so, might be regarded as implying that, after the lapse of four months, I now regret the step I took in proposing in the Presbytery, the motion which was defeated by the bare majority of three, and that I now take a less serious view of the dangerous consequences of the motion that was then passed, and against which we now complain. I trust that in now seeking to do my duty, I may so speak as not to add to the personal feeling already awakened, but that I may make the brethren from whom I differ perceive, that it is only a regard for what I conceive to be most vital truth, that places me in opposition to them on this question. Nay more, I fondly hope and pray that before these discussions are over, we may yet see eye to eye, and may have such explanations from our brother Dr. Dods, as will convince us all that, notwithstanding what he has written, he is still prepared to reconsider the views he has advocated, and to take up a position in full accordance with the doctrine and Standards of our Church, as to the inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority of Holy Scripture in all its parts. Though not formally stated in our reasons of dissent, I regard it as a valid reason for complaint against the decision of the Presbytery, that it precludes us from asking from Dr. Dods such explanations as even the defective report submitted to and approved of by the Presbytery, had clearly shown to be necessary, both for his own sake, and for the sake of the Church of which he is so distinguished a minister.

The Report goes so far in the way of indicating what is objectionable in the Sermon and Preface that no impartial reader can fail to be impressed with the impotence of its conclusion.

Strictures
of the Re-
port.

In the body of the Report, the Committee declare that Dr. Dods “does use language which, however unintentionally, yet really, seems to cast doubt on the necessity and the importance of divine inspiration ;” that he “has indulged in speculation, to an unwarrantable and perilous extent, regarding the nature and mode of inspiration ;” that he “has instituted comparisons and made representations which have a tendency to limit the sphere and lower the idea of inspiration ;” that he “has given rise to much anxiety regarding his views, by not connecting his vindication of the part which the sacred writers had in the production of Scripture with sufficiently explicit and prominent balancing statements as to the divine authorship, which underlies and shines through all the human authorship of the Bible ;” that he “holds a theory of inspiration which consists with the existence of certain inaccuracies or errors in sacred Scripture ;” that the “whole mode of representation adopted on this part of the subject is seriously objectionable ;” that he “gives an unhappy prominence to these alleged inaccuracies ;” that he “dwells on them in a way which, while far from intended, is fitted to grate on the feelings of those who tremble at the Divine Word ;” and that “the Sermon is open to grave objections in the respects and on the grounds already specified, and they do not wonder at the anxiety which it has awakened.”

Conclusion
of the Re-
port.

After such a series of very grave charges made in the Report itself, one would surely have expected that a Committee appointed, “to consider deliberately whether the Presbytery is called to take any action with regard to said views, and if so, of what nature, and to report to a subsequent meeting of Presbytery,” would have recommended some formal disapproval by the Presbytery of the Sermon and Preface. But no. The practical conclusion of the Report stands as follows : “In consideration of all this, and very specially of the serious doubts and misapprehensions as to his real meaning to which the Sermon has given rise, he (Dr. Dods) would probably do well not to carry the publication any farther, at least in its present form. But it is a relief to them, while saying all this, to be able to add, that in their judgment the Presbytery is not called to institute any process, or to take any further action in the matter ; and they now beg to report accordingly.” In other words, while they hint to Dr. Dods that he would “PROBABLY do well not to carry the publication of the Sermon any farther, at least in its present form,” they recommend the Presbytery to *take no action whatever*, not even to confer with Dr. Dods with the view of dispelling “the serious doubts and misapprehensions as to his real meaning to which,” as they affirm, “the Sermon has given rise.” I question if, in the whole course of our ecclesiastical procedure, it is possible to find a more striking illustration of the adage : “*Montes parturiunt ; nascetur ridiculus mus*,” and the Synod will not be surprised that so large a proportion of the members of Committee dissented from a

conclusion so "lame and impotent," and so inconsistent even with the strictures contained in the Report itself.

If these strictures were well founded, then, I contend that the Committee were bound, in faithfulness to all the important interests involved, to have recommended formal disapproval of the Sermon and Preface by the Presbytery; and, instead of giving advice to Dr. Dods as to what it would "PROBABLY be well" for him to do, they should have advised the Presbytery to *enjoin* him not to carry the publication any farther. That practical conclusion would have been the logical outcome even of the strictures contained in the Report, notwithstanding of its other blemishes and defects.

But, if so, how much more would it have been the logical outcome had that Report been otherwise satisfactory,—had it contained, as it ought to have done, "a full and faithful representation of the unscriptural and dangerous character of the views set forth in the Sermon and Preface." Such a representation, as our first reason for dissent and complaint affirms, the Report approved of by the Presbytery does not contain. On the contrary, the Committee by whom that Report was submitted, "apologise" for the views set forth in the Sermon and Preface reported on, "and not only so, but even vindicate the author in holding and publishing that there were errors and inaccuracies in the Scriptures as originally given, by declaring that the very same view has been held and advocated by theologians of the highest authority, and of world-wide reputation for orthodoxy, no less than for ability and learning." Nor is that all. Such condemnation of the Sermon and Preface as is found in the Report, though apparently severe in language, has respect not to, "the matter or doctrinal teaching contained in them," but solely to "the manner or form in which that teaching was expressed;" so that when the Presbytery "approve of the Report of the Committee now submitted, and, in accordance with the conclusions of it, find that the Sermon of Dr. Dods is open to grave objection in the respects, and on the grounds specified in the Report," there is simply a condemnation, as our second reason of dissent or complaint affirms, of "manner or form," but not "of matter or doctrinal teaching."

Conclusion required even by Strictures of the Report.

Unsatisfactory character of the Report.

That unsatisfactoriness reappears in decision of Presbytery

I observe that the Presbytery, in their answer to that second reason, deny this allegation, and seek to make it appear that their condemnation is of a much more thorough kind. They assert that it refers to "the teaching of the Sermon itself, as marked either by dangerous tendencies of a positive kind, or by serious defects,—and not merely to the form or manner in which that teaching is expressed." Further, in their answer to our first reason of dissent and complaint, they assert that, "so far from vindicating the teaching of Dr. Dods, on the subject of inaccuracies in the original Scriptures, they expressed strong disapproval of the same."

Answers of Presbytery

These answers unsupported either by Committee's Report or by deliverance of Presbytery

Nothing has more surprised myself, and I may say many others, in connection with this case, than this representation of the meaning of the Report, and of the deliverance of the Presbytery founded thereon. I defy any member of Presbytery to produce, either from the Report, or from the deliverance, a single statement that makes it plain that either the Committee or the Presbytery have expressed "strong disapproval" of the *teaching* of Dr. Dods on the subject of inaccuracies in the original Scriptures. A motion, recommending the Presbytery to express "disapproval," without the qualifying "strong," was made by myself in the committee, but was negatived by a majority. If that motion had been carried, some of us at least, would not have dissented from the conclusion of the Report.

These answers contradicted by speeches of leading supporters of the motion carried.

But that was not all. If anything was made more manifest than another in the discussions in the inferior court, it was that the motion proposed by Dr. Adam, and adopted by the Presbytery, does *not* condemn "the teaching of the Sermon," but simply and solely "the form or manner" in which that teaching is expressed; that, in particular, it does *not* express, "strong disapproval," of the teaching of Dr. Dods on the subject of inaccuracies in the original Scriptures. For proof of this, let me refer to the speeches of two of the most prominent supporters of the motion made by Dr. Adam. The seconder of that motion stated explicitly that he supported the motion, because it did not condemn the teaching of the Sermon as contrary to the Standards; and then he went on to say,—“Of course there was the other aspect of the case, viz., that though the teaching of Dr. Dods was not contrary to the Standards of the Church, yet there was something in the *manner* in which his views had been propounded, which had been so very objectionable as to call for the animadversion of the Courts of the Church.” Such is the interpretation put upon the motion by the seconder. Let me cite another prominent witness as to its meaning. Referring to the motion of Dr. Adam, Dr. Bruce said—"I am content with it for two reasons. 1st, Because it does not affirm that Dr. Dods' Sermon contains teaching contrary to the Standards; and, 2nd, Because it does not pronounce judicial condemnation on the opinion of Dr. Dods regarding certain defects, but only animadverts on the *manner* in which that opinion has been promulgated." These are specimens of what seemed to be the prevailing view of the supporters of the motion of Dr. Adam, as to its meaning.

Reversal of judgment of Presbytery absolutely necessary to remove ambiguity of motion carried.

How these brethren, after such explicit statements as to the meaning of the motion, could agree to the answers to our reasons of dissent and complaint, now on the table of the Synod, they are themselves probably the only competent parties to explain. But, certainly, the testimony they thus gave, at the time, is of the utmost consequence, as showing the absolute necessity for a reversal, by the Synod, of the

judgment of the Presbytery. It now turns out that those who constituted the bare majority, by which the motion of Dr. Adam was carried, are themselves divided as to its meaning,—one party holding that the Presbytery have condemned, or expressed “strong disapproval” of the “teaching” of the Sermon, while the other hold that they have condemned simply and solely the “*manner or form*” in which that teaching is expressed. Surely a motion so ambiguous, to say the least, ought not to be allowed to stand on the records of the Presbytery as the final deliverance, on a question of such importance, as the inspiration, infallible truth, and Divine authority of Holy Scripture.

Whatever be the final decision, it ought to be at least so clear, definite, and unmistakable, that no one can misunderstand the doctrine of the Church and of her Standards on the subject.

One thing, at all events, I wish to say in this connection, and in so doing I know that I speak for others, that if the judgment of the Presbytery had contained a clear unmistakable “disapproval” of the teaching of the Sermon and Preface, I would not have been to-day at your bar as a complainant. I would have been satisfied with the word “disapproval” found in the Presbytery’s answers to our reasons, even though the adjective “strong” there also introduced, had been wanting.

For on what ground could the Presbytery, as such, have thus expressed its “disapproval” of the teaching of the Sermon and Preface? On that point I thoroughly endorse the statement made by Dr. Bruce and concurred in by others. When criticising the motion proposed by Dr. Bonar, but afterwards withdrawn, he said, “We have no right judicially to condemn an opinion which is not contrary to the Standards.” To the same effect, Mr. Isdale said, “We may as individuals disapprove of these opinions, as in this case I do, but if they were not condemned by the Standards of the Church, then Dr. Dods was entitled to hold them and propound them, and they had no right to take any ecclesiastical action so far as the opinions themselves were concerned.” Well, I agree with these statements; and hence my readiness to substitute the motion which I proposed, for that which had been proposed by Dr. Bonar, and in which I had concurred. Our friends have been very anxious to represent the conduct of some of us, in that matter, as very vacillating,—as if, during the discussion, we had taken up an entirely different position on this question. Any one, however, who looks at the two motions in the light of what I have just said, will perceive that, though differently expressed, they are identical in meaning. The only difference between them is that the one is more explicit than the other as to the ground of disapproval. In the first motion, (Dr. Bonar’s), that ground was *implied*; as it was understood on all hands that there

Disapproval of teaching of Sermon only competent on the ground of the Standards.

Explanation of Motion proposed by Dr. Bonar.

could be valid "disapproval" only on the ground of the Standards; while in the second, (my own), that ground was *expressly mentioned*, so that there might be no possible mistake as to our meaning.

Query as to ground of "strong disapproval" in answers of Presbytery

And now, seeing that we are told by the Presbytery in their answers to our reasons, that they have expressed not only "disapproval" but "strong disapproval" of the teaching of Dr. Dods on the subject of inaccuracies in the original Scriptures, I want to know on what grounds they have done so. Is it on the ground of the inconsistency of that teaching with the Standards of our Church? If it is not on that ground, then, with Dr. Bruce and Mr. Isdale, I say that whatever might be your opinions, as individuals, you had no right, as a Presbytery, to express "strong disapproval" of the teaching of Dr. Dods. By so doing you are guilty of what Dr. Bruce well described in the Committee, as an act of "ecclesiastical tyranny." If, however, your "strong disapproval" of the teaching of Dr. Dods is based on its inconsistency with the Standards, surely it follows, according to the order of procedure, laid down by Dr. Bruce, when criticising the motion of Dr. Bonar, that "you are bound to put that in your motion as the only adequate ground of justification of condemnation." If this ambiguous decision of the Presbytery be reversed, and there be substituted for it, by the Court of Review, on the only ground on which it can be done, that expression of "strong disapproval" of the teaching of the Sermon and Preface which is found in the Presbytery's answers, but *not in their motion*, and the case be otherwise disposed of according to the laws of the Church, I have no doubt that it will take end, so far as our side of the bar is concerned.

Decision which will satisfy Complainants.

Bearing of such a decision on so-called withdrawal of Sermon by Dr. Dods.

But then we must consider what will be the bearing of such a decision upon the so-called withdrawal of the Sermon by Dr. Dods. The Presbytery, in their answer to our third reason of dissent and complaint, take great credit for having hit upon "the proper, and, as it has actually proved, the effectual way to secure the withdrawal of the Sermon." But I want to know, first of all, whether, as things now stand, the Sermon is withdrawn. Of course the mere fact of withdrawal, even though it had been made in the most absolute form, would have nothing whatever to do with the complaint we have taken. It would not alter, in the least, the objectionable nature of the deliverance of the Presbytery. If, therefore, the complainants had so desired, they might have refused to allow any reference whatever to be made to an event which took place after that deliverance had been passed, and when it was suspended by our dissent and complaint. But, as that so-called withdrawal is evidently considered by the Presbytery of so much importance, we certainly have no desire to prevent the Court from looking at it in all its bearings. If they do so, we are persuaded

that it will form the strongest of all reasons for the reversal of the judgment of the Presbytery.

For what is the understanding on which that so-called withdrawal proceeds? Dr. Dods made that abundantly plain, not only in the letter read to the Presbytery on the day when the motion of Dr. Adam was passed, but also, and specially, in the document read by him to the Presbytery at the next meeting, and, at his request, actually engrossed in our minutes, without any accompanying disclaimer of the interpretation thus put by him upon the deliverance of the Presbytery. That document is as follows:—"In view of the decision to which the Presbytery came last Thursday, and in pursuance of the statement that I then made, I beg now to express my willingness to withdraw my Sermon in its present form, and I say that in view of the Presbytery's decision—and on the grounds on which the decision was based; and I desire that it may be put upon the record of the Presbytery, that I withdraw my Sermon on the distinct understanding that a majority of the Presbytery has found that the views expressed in my Sermon and Preface are to be tolerated within the Church, and are not condemned by the Confession. I am, myself, of opinion that the views I have expressed are consistent with the Confession, and I withdraw it only in deference to the Presbytery's opinion, that the publication of these views has been ill-advised in form and in time. I have my own opinion on this decision. I do not think the Sermon, by any means, so bad as it has been represented. I know it has done good; but perhaps it has now done all the good it is likely to do, and I defer to the opinion of the Presbytery. My only difficulty is in connection with the appeal. It may seem premature to withdraw the Sermon before it has run the gauntlet of all our Courts, but if the Presbytery is of opinion that this does not form an obstacle, I am prepared to act upon the intimation I now give."

Under-
standing on
which that
withdrawal
proceeded.

Letter of
Dr. Dods
to Presby-
tery.

That document makes it evident that Dr. Dods agreed with the interpretation put upon the motion by Mr. Isdale and Dr. Bruce, and proposed to withdraw his Sermon on an understanding of the meaning of that motion very different from that now put on it by the Presbytery, in their answers to our reasons of dissent and complaint. He does so, he tells us, "on the distinct understanding that a majority of the Presbytery has found that the views expressed in the Sermon and Preface are to be tolerated within the Church, and are not condemned by the Confession." He interprets the motion further, as meaning simply that "the publication of these views has been ill-advised in form and in time." He proposes to withdraw his Sermon on this understanding,—on the understanding, viz., that provided he be only a little more careful as to "form and time," he may not only hold, but also preach, and publish the same views

Import of
said letter.

as are promulgated in the Sermon and Preface. Nay more, his so-called withdrawal is a virtual republication of these views, and that with the direct sanction of his Presbytery. Without a word of disclaimer from the Presbytery, he gets a statement engrossed in the minutes interpreting the judgment of the Court in the way I have indicated. He gets his Presbytery,—the largest Presbytery in the Church,—to admit, and officially to declare, that any minister of this Church may, without challenge, not only hold, but also preach and publish such views. I am aware that it is being said that it matters not what interpretation is put upon that motion by Dr. Dods and others, and that the Presbytery's decision is sufficiently clear and unambiguous. But I call attention to the fact that the Presbytery, in their answer to our third reason of dissent and complaint, allege that the Sermon *is withdrawn*. If that is so, it is withdrawn only on the understanding which, at the request of Dr. Dods, has been engrossed in the minutes of the Presbytery, viz.: "That a majority of the Presbytery has found that the views expressed in the Sermon and Preface are to be tolerated within the Church, and are not condemned by the Confession."

The State
of the
question
ecclesiasti-
cally con-
sidered.

But that is not all. The Presbytery, in their answer to our fourth reason of dissent and complaint, admit that this is the effect of their decision. They say that it "goes the utmost length in guarding against the holding and teaching of the views contained in the Sermon and Preface, which it is believed the Standards of the Church and the circumstances of the case warrant." In other words, the Presbytery admit that we have accurately put the *State of the question*, ecclesiastically considered, when, in our fourth, and most fatal reason of dissent and complaint, we affirm that "the decision of the Presbytery will, if unreversed, declare that any minister of this Church may, without challenge, not only hold, but preach and publish such views as are promulgated in this Sermon." After this admission, and the recording on the minutes without a disclaimer, the statement of Dr. Dods, it is the greatest farce possible for the Presbytery to speak of their deliverance as expressing "strong disapproval" of the views of Dr. Dods. If the case had never been raised at all, or if there had been an unqualified withdrawal of the Sermon, before the judgment of the Presbytery had been declared, the matter would have been on an entirely different footing. But as things now stand, (and in making this statement, I betray no confidence when I say that this is the view as to the effect of the Presbytery's action in engrossing the statement of Dr. Dods on the minutes, entertained by one of the wisest and most authoritative minds in the Free Church), unless the decision of the Presbytery be reversed, and the document handed in by Dr. Dods be removed from the records of the Presbytery,—not only will the Presbytery of Glasgow, but the whole church,

will be committed to the formal official sanction thus given to these views. The question as to whether these views may be held, preached, and published, by our ministers and professors, will be no longer open but closed,—so closed that it will no longer be possible to raise it in connection with any similar case. Such is the *State of the question* ecclesiastically considered.

But now what is the *State of the question* theologically considered? What are the views which are thus sanctioned? What is the doctrinal question involved? I reply that it is one of the most important and fundamental that could be raised in our church. It is a question affecting her Supreme Standard,—the Word of God. In few words, it is this, Were the human authors of the Bible so infallibly guided in their official work by the inspiring Spirit of God, that the sacred Books, *as written by them*, were throughout the very Word of God, absolutely free from error in all their parts and particulars—free from error as much in their statements of fact, as in their statements of doctrine and duty? Or, to put it in the words of the late Principal Candlish, it is this, Have we only the Word of God in the Bible, or is the Bible itself “in the strictest and fullest sense, in every particular of its contents and in every expression which it uses, the infallible Word of the one only living and true God?”*

The State of the question theologically considered.

The question is, the Synod will observe, not of an *a priori* kind, as to a *possible* Bible, but as to the one actually given by inspiration of God. In the Court below we were treated to a great number of suppositions as to what God might do, in the way of communicating to men the knowledge of the revelations He has made of Himself. We were told that He might have done so through an uninspired and fallible record, or through one only partially inspired, and so only partially infallible. I admit all that; but then the question here is not about what God might have done, but about what He has actually done. It relates to the existing Scriptures.

Not a question as to a possible Bible.

And it relates to these Scriptures, as *originally given*. It is not a question as to whether some trivial errors may not, in the course of ages, have found their way into our present MSS., or translations. We all admit, to use the words of Principal Candlish, “that the original text of the Sacred Books has suffered from successive copyings, that it must be adjusted by a comparison of manuscripts, and that the best adjustment can furnish only an approximation to absolute accuracy. 2nd, That all translations, ancient and modern, are imperfect.”† But whatever the amount of trivial error introduced into our present Bibles, through transcription or translation, the point I wish to make clear is this, that the question now raised does not relate to our present Bibles, but to the Scriptures as originally given. I am the more anxious to make this point clear, because I have been amazed to find, among intelligent laymen, and even among

Not a question as to our present MSS. or translations.

* Reason and Revelation, Preface, p. 21. † Reason and Revelation, p. 42.

the ministers of our Church, an idea that the question raised by Dr. Dods is as to whether there are not some trifling errors—errors of “no real importance” in *our present Bibles*.

Language of Dr. Dods can refer only to Scriptures as originally given

Let me say then, emphatically, that the question is not of that nature. That is abundantly evident from the language used in the Sermon and Preface. The idea of Dr. Dods, as there elaborated, is, that the errors he has in view, were introduced, in the very process by which the Bible was produced. Now, every one must see that the question thus raised about the Scriptures as originally given, is of a far more fundamental kind, and the answer to be given to it is far more important than any question that can be raised about our present Scriptures. There seems, on this point, to be the strangest perversion of mind among many of the supporters of Dr. Dods. They tell us that if we admit any error, however trifling, in our present Scriptures, we give up the whole question, and that Dr. Dods has just as good a right to say that there were errors in the original document, as we have to say that they were introduced in the process of transcription; and that for all practical purposes, the Bible will be of the same authority in either case.

Radical difference between this view of Dr. Dods and any admission of trivial errors through transcription.

Now, all this I most emphatically deny. Dr. Dods has not as good a right to say that there were errors in the Scriptures as originally given, as I have to say that errors have been introduced in the process of transcription. For, 1st, He cannot prove his allegation while I can prove mine. In the various readings found in different MSS., I have clear evidence that copyists were not miraculously preserved from error in transcribing, but he cannot produce the original document, so as to prove to me that there was error there. At best, his is a gratuitous assertion which he cannot establish, while in respect to any trifling error that may be found in the oldest MSS., I am entitled to say, sufficient time has elapsed since the Scriptures were originally

This view of Dr. Dods unscientific

given, for the introduction of that error. Dr. Dods' position is thus, first of all, a most *unscientific* one. But 2nd, it is a most *unscriptural* one. It directly contradicts the testimony

This view of Dr. Dods unscriptural.

of Scripture regarding itself,—the testimony of all the sacred writers; and is altogether inconsistent with the use made of Scripture by Christ and His apostles. Plainly the case is different with our present Scriptures, for there is no assertion made by the Scripture writers, or by Christ or His apostles, implying that copyists would be miraculously preserved from error. Nor is that all. For 3rd, the admission that there were errors of a trifling kind introduced through transcription, has a practical bearing very different from the assertion of error in the Scriptures as originally given. If there was error in the original Scriptures, then, as the late Dr. Fairbairn well put it, “no power of man can bring them up to the mark, or even tell precisely wherein they come short. There is no sure criterion to fall back upon, no higher counsel to call in for the rectification of that wherein

Practical bearing of this view.

they might be erring or defective. But, in respect to versions, we have an ultimate standard in the original Scriptures, so far as the true text is capable of being ascertained; and, again, for the ascertainment of this, we have unnumberable resources of a learned kind, which, as is well known to every person of moderate theological attainments, have left very little room for doubt as to the correct reading of all but a mere fragment of Scripture. The passages are scarcely worth naming, in regard to which there is now any material difference of opinion among those who are competent to judge in such matters."* Not a single doctrine or duty set forth in our present Scriptures is put in doubt by all the various readings; whereas, if there was error in the original document, *every doctrine and every duty* would be put in doubt. In the former case, you can gauge and measure both the quantity and the quality of alleged error, but in the latter you cannot. If the error was in the Scriptures, as originally given, they have no recuperative power to throw off this error; but if the error was introduced by transcription they have such power.

Again, this is not a question *as to the mode of inspiration*. Not a question as to the mode of inspiration
The complainants do not profess to be able to explain the mode of inspiration, nor do they care what theory a man adopts on that subject, provided he holds that all written under inspiration is the Word of God, of infallible truth, and Divine authority. I am the more anxious to call attention to this point, because a persistent attempt has been made by some of the supporters of Dr. Dods, to represent us as holding and advocating what has been called the "mechanical theory" of inspiration, according to which the human writers of the Bible were mere "machines" in the hands of the inspiring Spirit; or, as Emerson puts it, "more or less refined blow-pipes through which mechanical effects were produced." I know of no one who holds such a theory. For myself, I cannot apply the word "mechanical" either to the Spirit of God or to the spirit of man. On the contrary, we hold that the sacred writers were not machines in any sense; that their mental powers were not superseded; that there was no interference with the exercise of their distinctive mental peculiarities and idiosyncracies.† Instead of holding the mechanical theory, we will do all we can to prevent the Church from being committed to any theory on the subject. What we deem essential is not the mode but the *product* of inspiration, viz., a Book of infallible truth and Divine authority. We object to Dr. Dods' theory of inspiration, because it denies infallible truth and Divine authority to what is inspired. I appeal, therefore, to the honour and honesty of those who differ from us in this case, and ask them to cease from misrepresenting us

* Bible Dictionary, p. 793.

† On this part of the subject see Fairbairn's Bible Dictionary, pp. 790, 791.

on this aspect of the question, and from industriously placing a false issue before the Church, by saying that we are contending for a certain theory of inspiration.

Not a question as to the literary characteristics of the Bible.

Again. This is not a question *as to the literary characteristics of the Bible*,—as to whether there are diversities of style, idiom, grammar, corresponding to the mental idiosyncracies and literary training of the different human authors. We all admit these diversities; and if a man of pedantic turn, who has got some ideal of his own as to what constitutes perfect style and perfect grammar, shall affirm that there are occasionally in the Bible, faults in style, or errors in grammar, we do not suppose that a question need be raised as to his orthodoxy. The real question is not, as to whether there is in the Bible faulty style or bad grammar, but, as to whether there are erroneous statements. Some of our friends, and notably Dr. Dods, have slumped these together as if they were things of the same kind. “Their bad grammar” he says, “and rudeness of style were not corrected, neither were their erroneous impressions regarding ordinary matters. Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, but this did not prevent their speaking with a provincial accent, neither did it prevent their speaking in that whole region of thought in which their contemporaries moved.”* Surely the merest tyro in theological science must perceive that there is a strange want of homogeneity in the things here grouped together. A witness in a court of law may speak “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,” although he uses “bad grammar,” has a “rude style,” and speaks with a “provincial accent.” What we object to in the statements of Dr. Dods, is not that he lays such faults to the charge of the sacred writers, but that he charges them with committing to writing what is *not true*. The Spirit was promised to lead them into all truth, but not to make them good grammarians, nor to rectify their dialect, idiom, or style.

Not a question as to the personal views or conduct of the sacred writers.

Again. The question is not *as to what were the personal views or conduct of the sacred writers*, but as to what they officially committed to writing. It is not, Were these men personally infallible, but was the Bible, as written by them, the infallible record of an infallible revelation? As Dr. C. Hodge well puts it, “They were not imbued with plenary knowledge. As to all matters of science, philosophy, and history, they stood on the same level with their contemporaries. They were infallible only as teachers, and when acting as the spokesmen of God.” Further on, he says, “The sacred writers also differed as to their insight into the truths which they taught. The Apostle Peter intimates that the prophets searched diligently into the meaning of their own predictions. . . . Nor does the Scriptural doctrine on this subject imply that the sacred writers were free from errors in conduct. Their infallibility did not arise from their holiness, nor did

* Sermon, 4th Ed., p. 18.

inspiration render them holy. Balaam was inspired, and Saul was among the prophets. David committed many crimes, although inspired to write psalms. Peter erred in conduct at Antioch; but this does not prove that he erred in teaching. The influence which preserved him from mistakes in teaching was not designed to preserve him from mistakes in conduct." *

Again. The question is *not* as to whether the Bible is the Word of God *in the sense only of containing the direct utterances of God Himself* as the immediate speaker for the time being. We all hold that there are other things in the Bible beside "Divine revelation strictly so-called,"—that it contains a record of human affairs, of the sayings and doings of men and angels, as well as of the sayings and doings of God. "Written as it is," to quote the language of Dr. Fairbairn, "with much variety of form, containing a revelation from God made in diverse manners as well as at sundry times—and assuming often the form of narrative and dialogue—it cannot intend, when asserting its immediate connection with the Spirit of God, that every portion, viewed singly and apart, is clothed with Divine authority, and expresses the mind of Heaven. For that, it would require to have been cast throughout into the form of simple enunciations, or direct precepts; and all conversational freedom of discourse, and expressions of thought and feeling, adverse to the truth, must have been withheld. In speaking, therefore, of the inspiration of Scripture, respect must be had to the distinctive characteristics of its several parts. And where the sentiment uttered, or the circumstances recorded, cannot, from its obvious connection, or import be ascribed to God, the inspiration of the writer is to be viewed as appearing simply in the faithfulness of the record, or the adaptation of the matter contained in it to its place in the sacred volume. Were it but a human idea, or a thought even from the bottomless pit, yet the right setting of the idea, or the just treatment of the thought, may as truly require the guidance of the unerring Spirit, as the report of a message from the upper Sanctuary."†

Again. The question is *not* as to the use of popular language—language not scientifically exact. As the grand design of the Bible is not to teach science, but to teach religion, so, in doing this, it fitly speaks not in the language of science, but of common life, and of common men. It speaks familiarly, for instance, of the sun and the stars rising and setting, of the earth being established that it cannot be moved; of the falling of a stone to the ground, and of everything else in the outer world just as it appears to us, and totally without reference to the earth's motion on its axis, or to the law of gravitation. But this is just the language which every man uses in the intercourse of common life, and

Not a question as to whether there are other than Divine utterances in Scripture

Not a question as to the use of popular language in the Bible.

* Systematic Theology, pp. 165, 166. † Bible Dictionary, p. 788.

which even the most eminent scientists use, except when they are speaking or writing for a distinctly scientific purpose. But there is much more significance in the relation of the Bible to science than at first sight appears. While it was not given to teach science,—while it does not, by the use of scientific language, anticipate scientific discoveries, or supersede scientific research,—its references to the facts of science are always of such a kind, as to be perfectly consistent therewith. “When that is made clear, it furnishes,” as Dr. Candlish well puts it, “a most striking and irrefragable proof of the infallibility of the Bible; its having been composed under the eye and hand of an Infallible Mind, knowing all things from the beginning, and taking care that whatever of truth is revealed and written down, from time to time, partially and incompletely, to meet the successive exigencies of human sin, and suffering, and sorrow, and salvation, shall be, on the one hand, adapted to the existing state of knowledge at the time; and, on the other hand, consistent with all that ever can be known.”* In this respect how vast the contrast between the Bible and other sacred books!

Not a question as to relative imperfections in some parts of the Bible.

Again. It is *not* a question as to whether there are *relative imperfections* in some parts of the Bible. This word “imperfections” is one of those used by Dr. Dods, and no fault could be found with it if it stood by itself, and were properly defined and explained. Thus defined and explained, relative imperfection may be a necessary concomitant of God’s revelation *by means of man*. Permit me, on this subject, to quote again the discriminating statements of my revered theological teacher, the late Principal Fairbairn, who was so well qualified to handle all the difficulties of this question. Dr. Fairbairn, as you all know, was thoroughly conversant with the speculations of the German theology; but there was this great difference between him and some others who seem to make German theology their special study,—they allow the German rationalism to master them, while his well-balanced mind mastered the German rationalism. Referring to this subject, Dr. Fairbairn says, “As regards the verbal differences in the accounts of our Lord’s parables, discourses, and ministerial transactions, it must be admitted that there is a relative imperfection; for the diverse reports cannot be equally exact. . . . With all the supernatural grace and energy of the Spirit, scope must still have been allowed for the operation of personal gifts and tendencies; so that what appeared to one in our Lord’s words and actions as fit to be noted, did not always so present itself to another—different epitomes of His discourses were adopted, and the Greek words, which seemed to some the best equivalents for the original Aramaic, did not in every instance correspond precisely with those adopted by others. Yet, shall we err, if we hold each sacred? Shall we not find in each something which

Quotation from Dr. Fairbairn.

* Reason and Revelation, p. 85.

expresses the mind of the Lord? Doubtless we shall; none of them give the whole; but what is more specific in one throws light on what is more general in another; what is more full here, on what is more concise there; and thus, though each by itself is relatively imperfect, the whole together may afford as complete an exhibition of the truth as it is reasonable to expect, or possible to obtain."* Such are the well-balanced statements of Dr. Fairbairn. To the same effect, the late Dr. Islay Burns says, "Where the human and the divine are so inextricably blended in one common result, it becomes absolutely impossible clearly to discriminate the one from the other, to fix any definite point, where the one element ends and the other begins. We cannot determine *a priori*, either the kind or the amount of those human characteristics which may in the divine wisdom be found compatible, with the perfection of the final result, what freedom of historical detail, what popular rendering of scientific facts, what peculiarities of style and thought, what lesser irregularities in grammar or in diction, what liberty in quoting and in accommodating remembered words, what necessary anthropomorphisms and partial views and perspective glimpses of truth,—which in their absolute fulness, cannot be uttered by man. All this was inevitable from the very conditions of the problem which the divine wisdom had to solve, how best to speak of things divine in human words, and from a human point of view. Of this only we may be sure, that whatever of the distinctively human is permitted to mingle with the purely divine, is left there just because it is best that it should be there, and because what might appear to us imperfections in the parts, only contribute in the eye of unerring wisdom to the more absolute perfection of the whole."† Imperfections of this kind, as every one must see, are not errors, and are perfectly consistent with the infallible truth and Divine authority of every part of Holy Scripture.

Finally. The question is not about difficulties in Scripture which we may at present be unable to solve. After full allowance has been made for errors due to transcription, for the use of popular language, and for relative imperfections, every one admits that there are still difficulties of various kinds,—apparent anomalies, and things in one part of Scripture which are not easy to reconcile with others that occur elsewhere. This is only what the analogy of God's procedure in nature and providence would lead us to expect. Long ago, Origen drew attention to this point. "In both," he says, (*i.e.*, nature and revelation) "we see a self-concealing, self-revealing God, who makes Himself known only to those who earnestly seek Him: in both we find stimulants to faith, and occasions for unbelief." There are always difficulties when the Divine and the human meet. We find them in

Not a question as to unsolved difficulties in the Bible.

Difficulties to be expected.

* Bible Dictionary, p. 792. † Select Remains, pp. 284, 285.

creation, in the constitution of our own being, in providence, in the incarnation of Christ, and in the regeneration of believers. So is it here. These difficulties often arise from the limited character of our knowledge. We need to know more about all the circumstances, before we are able to determine which of several possible explanations is the right one, or whether there may not be an explanation in reserve. As Westcott states, "Even in those passages which present the greatest difficulties, there are traces of unrecorded facts which, if known fully, would probably explain the whole." The difficulties are vanishing quantities. Many of them that once appeared the most formidable have not only been solved, but have supplied new proofs of the absolute truthfulness of Scripture in all its details. If we have only a little more patience, they will all be solved by-and-bye.

Difficulties
useful,—
1. As an in-
tellectual
stimulus.

Meanwhile, they serve a twofold object. 1st. They supply an intellectual stimulus. In a nursery which I know there is a famous toy. It consists of multitudinous parts of a complete building. It is plain that somehow or other the parts fit into each other so as, in the end, to make a complete and perfect whole. Inasmuch, however, as no diagram was at first supplied with the toy, the children have hitherto failed in all their efforts to make the parts thus fit together. Do they, on that account, lose their faith in the perfection of the whole, or in the adaptation of all the parts? Nay rather, this unsolved difficulty becomes again and again a new stimulus to research. And so it is with these unsolved difficulties of the Bible. Because of them, I go the oftener to study the precious Book, use 'more carefully all critical and exegetical appliances, and pray more earnestly for the teaching of the Spirit. But, 2nd. These unsolved difficulties are also a moral test. In this respect the Bible is like the Saviour of whom it testifies. He is "set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel." While He is to some "The Foundation" laid by God in Zion, on which they build securely for eternity, He is to others "a stone of stumbling and rock of offence." If any man "love the darkness rather than the light;" if he want to find reasons for rejecting the Bible, he will find them in these unsolved difficulties; while, on the other hand, these same difficulties will prove a means of spiritual humbling and self-emptying to those who sincerely love the light. And these difficulties are, I believe, for the testing of Churches as well as of individuals. Who knows but that this Free Church of ours may now be thereby put on her trial? May she have grace to stand the test which these difficulties supply, and to prove more than ever loyal to that living and abiding Word, which is the charter of all her privileges.

2. As a
moral test.

These diffi-
culties test
Churches.

I have gone thus fully into all these details of a negative kind, in order that there may be no mistake as to the real and only question involved in this case. It is, I repeat, a question not as to a possible Bible, but as the Bible we

have, and that as originally given by God; not as to a mode of inspiration; not as to the literary characteristics of the Bible; not as to the private views or conduct of the sacred writers; not as to whether there are other than immediate divine utterances in the Bible; not as to the use of popular language; not as to relative imperfections in some parts of Scripture; not as to apparent discrepancies or unsolved difficulties.

What then is the question? It is as I indicated before, as to whether the inspiration ascribed to Holy Scripture secures infallibility, and as to whether that inspiration and that infallibility apply to all parts of Scripture,—to all the statements of fact, as well as to all the statements of doctrine and of duty. Theological question restated positively.

Now, on the complex question thus raised, the teaching of Dr. Dods, as presented in the Sermon and Preface, is sufficiently explicit. Whether he at all admits inspiration, in the orthodox sense, as securing infallibility, seems very doubtful; but even, if he does, it is plain that he restricts it entirely to certain parts of Scripture,—viz., to those described by him as bearing upon faith and life; and holds that in the other parts of Scripture there is no such inspiration and no such infallibility; but that, on the contrary, there are errors—real errors. The teaching of the Sermon of Dr. Dods on that question.

First of all, it is doubtful whether Dr. Dods admits that there is any inspiration whatever in the sense of Divine infallible guidance. All the references he makes to the subject, indeed, go to show that even in regard to doctrine and duty, he does *not* hold that there is such inspiration as that I have just defined. It is surely a striking fact that, although the heading of the Sermon is “Revelation and Inspiration,” there is not, from the beginning to the end, a single positive assertion which implies that in any matter whatever, the sacred writers had Divine infallible guidance. The only assertions made are to the effect that the inspiration they had, was an endowment, that did *not* preserve them from error. Nay more, the definitions given of the inspiration of the sacred writers, so far as they are intelligible, plainly mean that Dr. Dods has in view a different kind of inspiration from that which implies Divine infallible guidance. So far as I can make out, it is simply a higher degree of what has been called, though I think improperly, “the inspiration of grace,”—that enlightening, sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, which is common to all believers, with opportunities of knowing a revelation at first hand, and the historical facts in the ordinary way. Dr. Martin well describes it as “A compound of a little, or rather not a little, *revelation* properly so called; of a more than ordinary amount of *grace*, in the form of spiritual light or illumination; of what may be called, favourable providential circumstances; and of those particular gifts and graces that are required for the office of the Christian ministry: all resulting in what is called ‘special equipment.’”*

* The Westminster Doctrine of the Inspiration of Scripture, p. 35.

Quotations
from Ser-
mon of Dr.
Dods.

Here is the way in which Dr. Dods describes it, in the case of the historical writers of Scripture, "The inspiration of the apostles fitting them to preserve to the world the life and character of our Lord, was not an influence which served them instead of eyes and memory, but it was an influence which set them in the right attitude towards Him they were to reflect, and made them sensitive to everything in Him which was of the highest value.

The man who gave himself up to God, who was emptied of self-seeking and worldly ways of looking at things, was best fitted to understand what God sought to declare to men. Such a man became the purest possible channel for the Spirit. What he sees, he sees clearly and truly, having no interest to see anything different from what God actually makes known. . . . Inspiration, in short, is a spiritual gift and only indirectly a mental one. It illuminates the mind as enthusiasm does, by stimulating and elevating it; it enriches the memory as love does, by intensifying the interest in a certain object and by making the mind sensitive to the impressions and retentive of them. It brings light to the understanding, and wisdom to the spirit, as purity of intention does, or as a high aim in life does. But it is not a gift conferring intellectual acuteness where that did not previously exist, nor imparting any superhuman power of knowledge. If an error existed in the records used by the compiler of the Book of Chronicles, if the documents from which he was gathering his information mis-stated the numbers that fell in some battle, inspiration furnished him with no means of detecting such an error, any more than it furnished him with the ability to sit down and write the entire history of Israel out of his own brain without any documentary aid at all. If then we ask, What is it then that distinguishes these writers of Scripture? we answer, Mainly this, that they had the revelation at first hand, that they were the men before whom the revelation was made, and who were so impressed with it and saw its meaning, as to be moved to preserve and perpetuate this impression for the sake of others."*

Meaning
of these
quotations.

Now, from all this it is plain that, according to Dr. Dods, the main difference between the writers of the historical parts of Scripture (and he afterwards applies the same principle to the other writers,) and the spiritually-minded Christian of the present day is, that they had the facts they record "at first hand." They were "eye-witnesses," or had the facts from those who were so. "They never ask us," he says, "to take their word for a thing which they had not good means of knowing in the ordinary way, they do not come before us as men who by a process called inspiration were made aware of facts which had not come within their own observation or knowledge, neither do they bid us accept their testimony without question as infallible,

* Sermon, 4th Edition, pp. 20, 21, 22.

but they say that by many infallible proofs Christ had appeared to them after the resurrection, and they ask us to believe their word, as honest men, that they saw Him.”*

Now I do not cite these statements with the view of showing their contrariety with the facts of the case, or the impossibility on such a theory of inspiration to say what books should be excluded from the Canon, and what others should be included,—although all that could be easily done ; but rather with the view of making plain to the Court, the kind of inspiration ascribed by Dr. Dods to the writers of the Bible, more especially of the historical portions. It is inspiration in the sense in which the term is employed by such men as Schleiermacher, Coleridge, Maurice, Morell. “Inspiration,” says Morell, “depends upon the manner, form, and accuracy of a man’s religious intuitions. . . . Let there be a due purification of the moral nature, a perfect harmony of the spiritual being with the mind of God, a removal of all inward disturbances from the heart, and what is to prevent or disturb the immediate intuition of Divine things, and what do we require in inspiration more than this?”†

In a note at the end of the Fourth Edition of his Sermon, Dr. Dods acknowledges his “indebtedness to Erskine’s *Spiritual Order*, Horne’s *Reason and Revelation*, and Rainy’s *Cunningham Lectures*.” I am surprised to find Dr. Rainy’s Lectures referred to in this connection ; but we may well leave it to the learned Principal himself, to shew whether he has given any countenance to such views as are found in the Sermon and Preface of Dr. Dods. Any one, however, who looks into the works of Erskine of Linlathen, and Horne’s book, will see that the admission of indebtedness was needed, as respects both these authors. The parallelism of view, and even of expression, is, to say the least of it, very striking. As illustrations of that parallelism were given some time ago, so far as the work of Erskine is concerned, in an article which appeared in the *Monthly Presbyterian*, I will not take up your time by referring to it here. Let me, however, give a few extracts from the volume of Horne, with the view of shewing the real character and tendency of the views of the Sermon and Preface. As members of the Synod may not have seen the volume referred to, and may suppose that the author is identical with the author of the “Introduction to the Bible,” I may explain that, as appears from a Prefatory Note, he was, in 1876, when the Book appeared, a student of St. Andrews, and that the line of inquiry carried out in his volume on “Reason and Revelation” was first undertaken for a Scottish Inter-University Prize of £100, which was adjudged to him by “Principal Tulloch, Principal Caird, and Dr. Hannah, then Warden of Trinity College, Glenalmond.” In that same Prefatory Note Mr. Horne acknowledges *his* special indebtedness to “Ewald and Rothe.” It is evidently indebtedness all

Authors to whom Dr. Dods acknowledges his indebtedness.

Query,
Who is
Horne?

* Sermon, p. 19. † Philosophy of Religion, pp. 158, 176, 186.

Parallel-
ism of the
views of
Horne and
those of
Dr. Dods.

round. And now for the views of Mr. Horne. At p. 164, he says, "There are in the various parts of the Old and New Testaments accounts of revelations, to perceive which originally, as even now vitally to know them, presupposed spirits prepared for the reception of this sphere of truth, (Dr. Dods says, 'emptied of self-seeking and worldly ways of looking at things,')—to record which, however, required only, that those who received the revelations, and represented them to their own spirits, could tell the impressions which the spiritual manifestations produced on their inner life." Further on he says, p. 165, "But their special relation to us and their prime importance is the immediateness of that revelation (Dr. Dods calls it 'revelation at first hand') in their inner life, and in the times in which they lived. To them in varying measure was given to see and handle the Word of life, and from their position and the reflection they were enabled to give of the manifestation of the Divine, arises their supreme excellence." There is here not a word about Divine infallible guidance, to enable the spiritual man accurately to perceive and record his spiritual experiences. Left thus to himself, he may fail to convey a correct impression of the revelation made to him,—even though it may have come from the Spirit of God. Indeed, infallible guidance is, by Mr. Horne, expressly denied to the sacred writers. "If," he says, p. 165, "we ascribe what we call absolute infallibility to these reflectors of the Divine revelation in history, let us take heed lest we attribute more to them than they themselves claim, or than we from facts are warranted in doing." Further on, he says in the same page, "We might infer from the various writings of the authors in both Testaments, that they were able to record the things made known to them, and the thoughts arising out of the new life, as truly as others can depict their experiences and thoughts on natural subjects. And what else do we require? Freedom from error does not consist in such surveillance over all the faculties of Biblical authors as would prevent memory from stumbling ever so slightly (Dr. Dods says 'lapse of memory'), or inadvertencies occurring, as in Matt. xiii. 35, or in Paul's historical reference in 1 Cor. x. 8, or a wrong translation of Psalm lxviii. 18 by him in his letter to the Ephesians chap. iv. 8. . . . Even in matters apparently more significant, I cannot see that the New Testament writers were exempt from error, or that essential correctness required this; *e.g.*, I cannot see that they had clear and definite rules of prophetic interpretation, or that they were infallibly supplied with exegetical and critical principles, which is so far from being the case, that these principles, so important to us, never appear to occur to them."

Inspiration
properly
defined.

From this definition of inspiration adopted by Dr. Dods from the volume of Horne, I turn gladly to that given in

an earlier volume on "Reason and Revelation," by an author whose opinions will always carry much weight in the theological world, I mean the late Principal Candlish. Inspiration he defines "as an infallible Divine guidance exercised over those who are commissioned to declare the mind of God, so as to secure that in declaring it they do not err. What they say or write under this guidance, is as truly said and written by God, through them, as if their instrumentality were not used at all. God is in the fullest sense responsible for every word of it."* So essential to inspiration did Principal Candlish regard this "infallible Divine guidance," that he says, "As to inspiration, I care for no admission or acknowledgment of it which does not imply infallibility. I intend, indeed, rather to avoid the use of this word inspiration; not because I consider it unsuitable—it is the right word—but because it has been, I fear I must say disingenuously, perverted from its recognized meaning, as expressive of that Divine superintendence of the process of revelation which secures infallibly the truth and accuracy of what is revealed, and made to signify the mere elevation, more or less, of human, and therefore fallible capacity or faculty."†

Now, any one who reads the Sermon of Dr. Dods must see that he uses inspiration in the perverted sense here indicated by Principal Candlish, as signifying "the mere elevation, more or less, of human, and therefore fallible capacity or faculty." The men inspired were, according to him, not only liable to err, but *did actually err*. The Books written by them under the inspiring Spirit contain "errors and imperfections"‡ "inaccuracies such as occur in ordinary writings through imperfect information or lapse of memory."§ The "erroneous impressions" of its writers "regarding ordinary matters," were not corrected.|| The "popular fallacies which existed in the minds of those who contributed to the Scriptures" were not corrected. Inspiration did "not prevent them from speaking in that whole region of thought in which their contemporaries moved."¶ "I will not deny, that he (*i.e.*, Paul) was occasionally wrong in a date." . . . "I will not deny that his style is often awkward, nor that his ideas and modes of argument are sometimes strangely out of harmony with our modes of thought."** Dr. Dods speaks of the errors referred to in his Sermon as "trifling," and as of "no real importance;" and with the view evidently of minimising their importance, his supporters discard the use of the word "error" altogether, except as referring to "grammar, numbers, and dates," while they constantly substitute for it such expressions as "apparent anomalies," "apparent inaccuracies," "imperfections." Now, no one who carefully reads the extracts I have just given

Definition
of inspira-
tion by Dr.
Dods.

Errors
with which
it consists,

* Reason and Revelation, p. 23. † Reason and Revelation, p. 54.

‡ Sermon, p. 17. § Sermon, Preface, p. 9. || Preface, p. 18.

¶ Sermon, p. 18.

** Sermon, p. 24.

can admit their right to do so. Here we have not only "errors in dates," "inaccuracies,"—not apparent but real inaccuracies,—and "imperfections;" but also "erroneous impressions," "popular fallacies," "the region of thought in which their contemporaries moved," "ideas and modes of argument strangely out of harmony with our modes of thought." Who can tell how much error may be covered by such a variety of expressions? First, We have a general description of these errors, viz., "such as occur in ordinary writings"—thus bringing the Bible, in this respect, practically to a level with other books. Second, We have the various kinds, errors of dates, numbers, facts, ideas. Third, We have the sources from which they come. (1.) "Imperfect information,"—how much will that cover? (2.) "Lapse of memory,"—what a fruitful source of error? (3.) "Erroneous impressions," truly a wide door! (4.) "Popular fallacies,"—is that not sufficient to cover all the errors of the age in which they wrote? (5.) "Region of thought, in which their contemporaries moved,"—how many errors may be derived from such a source? (6.) "Modes of argument,"—may not that vitiate the whole doctrinal system of Scripture? Such statements as these make it plain either that Dr. Dods does not admit inspiration at all in the orthodox sense, or, at all events, that he, limits its application to certain parts of Scripture.

Letter of
Dr. Dods
to Con-
vener of
Committee

Nor am I moved from this position by anything contained in the written communication from Dr. Dods which was laid before the Committee, and which is paraded in the Report as settling the question of "his orthodoxy in this respect, which is the fundamental matter here involved." The leading questions put to Dr. Dods by the Convener,—and they were put solely on his own responsibility, and without any consultation with the Committee,—are so ambiguous, that affirmative replies to them by Dr. Dods are utterly valueless in this connection. In reply to the first question of the Convener, Dr. Dods says, "You are right in believing that I hold, and do not mean by anything in my Sermon to call in question, the Divine supernatural inspiration of the Scriptures." Here everything depends upon what Dr. Dods means by "the Divine supernatural inspiration of the Scriptures." Does he mean inspiration, in the sense so fully elaborated in the Sermon and Preface, as implying simply a higher degree of enlightening and sanctifying grace, with "knowledge of facts at first hand;" or inspiration in the orthodox sense, as implying infallible Divine guidance? Of inspiration in both of these senses, you may say that it is both "Divine" and "supernatural." It is "Divine," inasmuch as it is produced by the Spirit of God; and it is "supernatural," inasmuch as it is beyond the mere working of nature. I obtain no light, therefore, as to the real views of Dr. Dods, from his thus answering a question, couched in such ambiguous language. We all know that

Its am-
biguity.

error is often veiled under orthodox language, for, as Mr. Horne says truthfully, p. 157, "Inquirers in England even more than in Germany, although the complaint comes from Germany, have to lament that they often find, even among liberal thinkers on this subject, a certain playing with the views of older times; 'they make use of the Church expressions, but unite with them an altogether different meaning.'" Will Dr. Dods accept of me as his questioner in the place of Dr. Adam, and let me ask whether he believes in the "Divine supernatural inspiration of the Scriptures in the orthodox sense as implying infallible Divine guidance?" But why should I ask him to give an answer to that question, seeing that in his Preface he has already done so? Referring to the charge of evacuating "the term 'inspiration,' at least as regards the historical books, of the meaning which is commonly supposed to attach to it," he goes on to say, "I have no wish to shelter myself and hide what I believe to be the truth under an ambiguous term. Therefore, I say plainly that if I supposed the Confession to mean what Dr. Hodge says it means, I could not accept it. Dr. Hodge, on page 55 of his Commentary on the Confession, and speaking of Inspiration, says: 'The nature of this Divine influence we, of course, can no more understand than we can in the case of any other miracle. But the effects are plain and certain, viz., that all written under it is the very Word of God, of infallible truth, and of Divine authority; and this infallibility and authority attach as well to the verbal expression in which the revelation is conveyed as to the matter of the revelation itself.' This I distinctly deny."* Observe what he denies. He denies, if his language has any meaning, the fourfold averment he quotes from Dr. Hodge. He denies, 1st, that all written under inspiration is "the very Word of God." He denies, 2nd, that all written under inspiration is "of infallible truth." He denies, 3rd, that all written under inspiration is "of Divine authority." He denies, 4th, that the "infallibility and authority attach as well to the verbal expression in which the revelation is conveyed as to the matter of the revelation itself." If I have not misunderstood his meaning, and if he still adheres to this fourfold denial, I do not see how it can be admitted that he holds "Divine supernatural inspiration," in the orthodox sense, for plainly he does not.

He denies the fourfold averment of Dr. Hodge.

But perhaps it may be supposed that his reference in his letter to the expression, "inspiration does not impart any superhuman power of knowledge" and his virtual withdrawal thereof, as being "much too broad and sweeping," are evidence that his view of inspiration does not after all, fall so very far short of the orthodox one. Such a conclusion is not for a moment to be thought of. Either the Sermon

The expression withdrawn as "much too broad and sweeping."

* Preface, pp. 8, 9.

is very illogical, or the words in question are the natural outcome of the preceding statements and reasonings. These words are not an isolated statement which can be wrenched from the context. They rather form the flower and fruit of the general doctrine of the Sermon on the subject of inspiration. They only express a little more clearly and distinctly what is plainly implied in many other statements of the Sermon, and carry them to their logical consequences. It is to no purpose then, that Dr. Dods tells us that the expression is "much too broad and sweeping," (and that is all he says,) when the premises and reasonings from which it springs, lie embedded throughout the whole Sermon and Preface. Surely it would have been well if Dr. Dods had used these words as a mirror, in which to discover the true character and tendencies of the theory of inspiration laid down in the Sermon.

His answer
to the Con-
vener's
Second
Question.

That Dr. Dods limits the range of inspiration and consequent infallibility, is further evident from the answer he gives to the second question of Dr. Adam. "I hold," he says, "that the inaccuracies alluded to in my Sermon in no way affect the authority and sufficiency of the Scriptures as an infallible revealed rule of faith and life." This also has been paraded as an important admission by Dr. Dods, evidencing the harmony of his views on this point, both with the doctrine and the Standards of our Church. I wonder whether our friends who talk in this fashion are aware that Bishop Colenso, and men of that stamp, have used language which goes quite as far in the way of admitting "the authority and sufficiency of the Scriptures, as an infallible revealed rule of faith and life." After affirming that "the Pentateuch, as a whole, was not written by Moses, and that, with respect to some, at least, of the chief portions of the story, it cannot be regarded as historically true;" even Colenso goes on to say—"But the Bible does not, therefore, cease to 'contain the true Word of God,' to enjoin 'things necessary for salvation,' to be 'profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness.' It still remains for us that Book, which, whatever intermixture it may show of human elements,—of error, infirmity, passion, and ignorance—has yet, through God's Providence, and the special working of His Spirit on the minds of its writers, been the means of revealing to us His True Name, the Name of the only Living and True God, and has all along been, and, as far as we know, will never cease to be, the mightiest instrument in the hand of the Divine Teacher, for awakening in our minds just conceptions of His Character, and of His gracious and merciful dealings with the children of men."* Such an extract shows to what extent the Bible may be practically set aside as erroneous,

* Bishop Colenso on the Pentateuch. p. 28.

while it is yet spoken of as the authoritative, sufficient, and infallible rule of faith and life.

Instead of telling us that the inaccuracies referred to in his Sermon in no way affect "the authority and sufficiency of the Scriptures as an infallible revealed rule of faith and life," it would have been more to the point if Dr. Dods had tried to show how the Bible *can* be such a rule and yet contain such "inaccuracies," "errors," "imperfections," "erroneous impressions on ordinary matters," "popular fallacies," "ideas and modes of argument," as are spoken of in the Sermon and Preface. I, at any rate, cannot see how it can. If the sacred writers erred on other matters, what guarantee have I that they did not also err in respect to doctrine and duty? Nor is my way made more clear when I am assured by Dr. Dods, that the errors to which he refers are of "no real importance." The fact that they are *real errors* does, in my judgment, give them "real importance," and affects very much my reception of the Book in which they are found. They make me feel that I am no longer in the hands of men who enjoyed infallible Divine guidance in all they wrote; and that, if they erred in lesser matters they may also have erred in greater. As respects their alleged errors, it is with me a question not of quality or of quantity, but of *existence*. If there were in the Scriptures as originally given, any real errors however trifling, then the men who wrote the Bible were not infallibly guided by the Spirit of God, at least, in some matters. And, if not in some, what proof have I that they were infallibly guided in any? On what principle can you affirm that their infallibility extends to doctrine and duty, if it does not also extend to other things? To use the language of Dr. Adam when referring to this part of the subject,—“How, when you open the door for the entrance of small defects, can you shut it against those which bring in all sorts of errors?” If you admit what you call “trifling” errors, how can you object to the criticism of Row, when, in his Bampton Lectures, he treats as non-trustworthy the Biblical account of the creation, the antiquity of man, and the deluge? I refer thus specially to him, because he holds the same views as Dr. Dods on this question, and was cited, with approbation, by those on the other side of the bar.*

On the theory of Dr. Dods, can the Bible be an infallible revealed rule of faith and life?

Mr. Row's view.

* It was only after a very keen and protracted debate, that those who dissented from the Report succeeded in excluding from it the following sentences, which formed part of the original draft :—“Now, while the Committee express no acquiescence in the views thus stated,” (viz., that inspiration “consists with the existence of certain inaccuracies or errors in Sacred Scripture”), “they are unable to see that there is anything so unsound or dangerous about them, that liberty to hold them should be denied; that there is aught in the Standards to call for ecclesiastical action in such a case as the present, so far as the aspect of it now under consideration is concerned. To bind up the infallibility of Scripture with a theory the opposite of this, to make it stand or fall with the contention that there is, and can be no minute inaccuracies on any subject referred to, however incidentally, in the Bible, is to play into the hands of the enemies of the faith, and to endanger

The length to which the principle is carried by Mr. Row shows that, when it is once admitted, every man will, according to his own theological stand-point, draw for himself the dividing line between the true and the false in the Bible. He will be able, by this principle, not only to get rid of such facts as he does not care to believe, but also of such doctrines and duties as do not commend themselves to his acceptance. What light does this throw upon the statement of Dr. Dods; in pp. 6, 7 of his Preface? "I can only accept in doctrine that which fits itself in with my previously received ideas and my stage of mental growth. When the doctrine of the Trinity is conveyed to me, I accept this because I find in it the root which the facts of redemption require. But if as yet I have not received the leading facts of redemption, I shall be unable to accept the doctrine of the Trinity, on whatsoever authority announced." Does it also supply the key to the following statement:—"I do not believe what Paul says, because I first believe him to be inspired; but I believe him to be inspired, because he brings light to my spirit, which can only have proceeded from God"? * If Erskine of Linlathen supplies this idea of a spiritual faculty of itself perceiving and receiving Divine truth, (and, of that no one who only glances at Erskine's *Spiritual Order* can have any doubt), is it not the criticism of the Row School which casts down the Bible before it, and makes it free to take or reject at its pleasure?

Thus no
objective
Standard.

According to this principle there is no clear, fixed, definite, authoritative, objective standard of doctrine and duty. For that there, is substituted the Christian consciousness which, according to its own caprice, extracts from the Bible what it regards as an infallible rule of faith and life. The divine communications are in that case all subject to me. I am their master; I receive them only in so far as they commend themselves to my spiritual consciousness. Instead of bringing the facts of my spiritual experience to the Bible as to a fixed standard outside of me, for determining their quality, I bring the Bible to my spiritual experience, that I may find out *how much of it* I shall accept, and how much of it I shall reject. In this way I may, on the very same principle on which I reject part of the Bible as fallible, come ultimately to reject the whole. As Heber well puts it in his Bampton Lectures, "It is the misfortune of this Scythian mode of warfare, that it is only suited to a territory which, like Scythia, is little worth preserving; and that the practice once begun of abandoning to the pursuer whatever parts of Scripture it does not exactly suit us to defend, no means of defence will

under the plea of vindicating the authority of the sacred volume. The warnings uttered on this subject by the most eminent apologetic writers of the present day—as, for example, by one so distinguished in this department as Mr. Row, in his lately issued "Bampton Lectures"—are not to be lightly regarded by men who have any understanding of the times" !!!

* Sermon p. 24.

at length remain for those tenets themselves which we now regard as of vital importance."

But that is not all. Even those matters in respect to which Dr. Dods contends that the sacred writers did fall into error, without invalidating their authority in respect to matters of doctrine and duty, are not as he represents, of "no real importance." There are no such matters in the Bible. We may be sure that every statement there is of real importance. Even those parts of Scripture which may seem to us comparatively unimportant, have uses that can be readily discerned and appreciated. To quote the language of Dr. Fairbairn, "They connect the writer with the times and circumstances in which he lived. They were so many points of contact between himself and the living world around him; and points that often form a kind of bridge between the sacred and the profane territory; in the first instance, giving an air of naturalness and verisimilitude to the revelation, and afterwards supplying *data* for the verification of its contents. How much would the Bible have wanted in general interest, and appearance of truthfulness, if it were stripped of the minor details which are found in it? And how many incidental confirmations of its genuineness and authenticity should have been lost, which, mainly in connection with these notices of common affairs, have been furnished by later research. It is to them, in great measure, we owe the possibility of such Works as Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, Smith's *Narrative of Paul's Shipwreck*, and many similar works, which have rendered the most essential service to the defence of the Bible. The genealogies themselves have their value; for they are, in a manner, the skeletons of history, on whose naked ribs, or projecting outlines, we can often grope our way to interesting or important movements in the past. And, besides the more special lessons which it will always be found on careful reflection can be derived from the mention of things comparatively little and common, there is this instructive lesson—that the Book, which is emphatically the revelation of God's mind to men, does not disdain to touch on even the smaller matters that concern them, and while it seeks to lift them above earthly and sensuous things, still willingly accords to these the place that properly belongs to them." *

If his language has any meaning, the views which we have seen to be so objectionable, are those promulgated by Dr. Dods in the Sermon and Preface. Considering his evangelical stand-point, his devotional spirit, and the spiritual character of his writings, I have always clung to the hope that he has not done justice to himself in that Sermon, and that these are not the views to which he will, after reflection, give a fixed adherence. I do so the rather because the Sermon is, as the Report puts it, "fragmentary and immature," and is evidently not the result of his own inde-

Injurious
effects of
Presby-
tery's
action on
Dr. Dods.

* Bible Dictionary, pp. 795, 796.

pendent thinking. As any one who reads the volumes of Erskine and Horne will perceive, he has got into the current of thought and speculation found there, and has allowed himself to be borne along, without seeming to be fully aware of all the dangerous consequences to which it leads. For this reason I was anxious that there should be a formal disapproval of his views by his Presbytery. I expected, from the courteous attitude uniformly maintained by Dr. Dods towards his brethren, that he would have paid due deference to the clearly expressed judgment of his Presbytery. I consider that the Presbytery has done a grievous wrong to him, as well as to the cause of divine truth by the course they have followed. Instead of passing a judgment that might have been of use in leading our brother to reconsider the views he has advocated in his Sermon and Preface, they have, *per saltum*, committed the whole Free Church, so far as their act can do so, to these views, by giving them official sanction.

This is
a new
doctrinal
position.

Now, surely this is a new doctrinal position, so far as the Free Church is concerned. These certainly are not the views that have been hitherto held in this Church, and promulgated from her pulpits and professorial chairs. That is apparent, from the quotations I have already made from the writings of such men, as Principal Candlish, Principal Fairbairn, and Dr. Islay Burns. I could easily multiply quotations to the same effect, from such trusted theologians of our Church, as Chalmers, Cunningham, and Bannerman; and, indeed, from all who have written on the subject. But your time does not permit, and such authorities are not needed, inasmuch, as it will scarcely be disputed, that this is the first time that such views as those in the Sermon and Preface of Dr. Dods have been published in our Church. The attempt made by Dr. Dods, in his letter to the *Daily Review*, to find support for his views, in the volume of the late Principal Candlish on "Reason and Revelation," was so unsuccessful, that I scarcely expect it to be repeated. Nor need I dwell on the futile attempts made in the Report, and in the Court below, to prove that the views of Dr. Dods have been held and advocated by such theologians as Dr. C. Hodge, Scott, Henry, Baxter, and Howe. Fortunately, the veteran theologian of America is still alive, and, as appears from a letter sent by him to my friend Mr. Bremner, able to make it abundantly evident—although his published writings had made any testimony of that kind superfluous—that he holds views on the subject of inspiration directly the reverse of those advocated in the Sermon and Preface. Had the passage from Scott been fully quoted, it would have been equally clear that his views also are in direct antagonism to those of Dr. Dods. The views of Henry on inspiration are also the very reverse of those advanced in the Sermon and Preface. The quotations from the published writings of Baxter and Howe, of which so

Not held
by authors
cited in its
support.

much was made by Dr. Adam, referring as they do, not to the facts or truths of Scripture, but simply to the style or language in which these have been recorded by the several writers, are totally irrelevant. Here is, for instance, what Baxter says—I cite him because he was quoted both by Dr. Adam and Dr. Bruce,—“If Scripture be so certainly true, then those passages in it that seem to men contradictory, must needs be true; for they do but seem so, and are not so indeed. Ignorance makes men think all dark and self-contradicting which they read. It would make one pity some wretched souls, to hear how confidently they will charge some texts with contradictions, through their mere ignorance of the plain sense, which when knowing men have manifested to them, they are ashamed of their rashness.” * I hope the supporters of Dr. Dods, who have cited such authors as countenancing his views, are now ashamed of their “rashness,” and that, henceforth, they will cease to quote theologians “of world-wide reputation for orthodoxy,” and fall back upon those of the School of Ewald, Schleiermacher, Row, Morell, Erskine of Linlathen, and Horne of St. Andrews.

But, after all, this is not to a question to be determined by the number or weight of the authorities on either side. It is one that must be decided by the Standards of the Church. Now, the complainants hold that the teaching of the Sermon and Preface is inconsistent with the Confession of Faith. In maintaining that it is so, it is not needful for us to hold that the theory on the subject of inspiration, broached in this Sermon, was present to the minds of the authors of the Confession, and intentionally excluded by them. They lay down no theory of inspiration. The term inspiration is introduced by them only as the connecting link between the Divine and the human authorship of the Bible. According to them, inspiration is, as Dr. Martin well puts it—“Just that action of the Divine will which brings the two authorships—the Divine and the human—into concurrence, giving to each its place, and doing injustice to neither. It was needful, because what men were to write was to be the Word of God; because what God was to commit to writing He was to commit to writing by the instrumentality not merely of men, but of the authorship of men. *That is inspiration*, defined not as in itself, but by what rendered it necessary, and by what it has accomplished. . . . Divine authorship through the instrumentality of human authorship; —*that* calls for inspiration; *that* is what inspiration effects. And if a definition of inspiration is required, inspiration is *what effects that*. More about inspiration, we do not and we cannot know. More, our Confession does not profess to teach or call us to believe or profess, scarcely even that, except inferentially. Without any exposition, it simply quotes (in a connexion, however, that fairly implies that), concerning

Inconsistent with the Confession of Faith.

* Baxter's Works, Vol. II., p. 257.

Its teaching clear as to product of Inspiration viz., Divine authorship

the Old and New Testaments, the scriptural assertion that they are 'all given by inspiration of God,' 2 Tim. iii. 16.* But while the Confession lays down no theory of inspiration, it is clear and unmistakable in its teaching as to the *product* of inspiration. It explicitly asserts, and that in different forms of expression, the divine authorship of the Bible in all its parts. And this divine authorship is not asserted in any loose or general sense. It rests on the fact "that it pleased the Lord" "to commit" "wholly unto writing," "that knowledge of" Himself and "of His will which is necessary unto salvation."† These it was the object of this Divine action to convey, and these things accordingly the Scriptures *principally* teach. But the Divine authorship, according to the teaching of the Confession, is not confined to these; it extends to the whole contents of Holy Scripture. Hence it is said (Conf. I. 2.) that, "Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the Books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these:—(and then follows a detailed list of the Books). All which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life." "All which," *i. e.*, not merely some books, or some parts of books, but all the books just enumerated and in all their parts, "are given by inspiration of God, *to be*"—not to contain but "*to be* the rule of faith and life." The authors of the Confession declare that *the design* of Holy Scripture is "to be the rule of faith and life;" but they give no shadow of a foundation for the inference which has been drawn from their words, that there are some parts of the books which are, and others which are not "the rule of faith and life." On the contrary, they assert of all the books equally, and of all the parts thereof, without distinction or exception, that they are "the word of God written," and that they "are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life." To the same effect they say, in Section 4th of the same chapter, "The authority of the Holy Scripture for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God, (who is truth itself,) the author thereof." There can be no mistake as to the meaning of these words. Whatever human authorship belongs to the Bible, God is also, according to this statement, "the author *thereof*,"—the author, that is, of Holy Scripture—of the whole Book, and of every part of it, for there is no limitation of the divine authorship merely to these parts, which, on the face of them, refer to "doctrine or duty." He is the author "*thereof*"—of the whole Book equally and without distinction of parts. God is thus represented by the Confession as responsible equally for everything which Holy Scripture contains; for its statements of fact, as well as for its statements of doctrine and duty. If the affirmations of the Confession about divine authorship do not apply to all the parts of the Book, it cannot be shewn

* The Westminster Doctrine of the Confession, pp. 11, 12. † Confession I. 1.

that they apply to any part, not even to those affecting "doctrine or duty;" for they are made about the whole Book without limitation or distinction. And what, according to the Confession, does this divine authorship involve? That is plain from the parenthetical words, "who is truth itself," introduced in this connection,—“God, (who is truth itself,) the author thereof.” Manifestly, these words are introduced by the authors of the Confession for the very purpose of excluding “error” from Holy Scripture as originally given by its Divine Author; for the very purpose of emphasising the absolute truthfulness and infallibility of the whole Bible in all its parts. Plainly, they would have regarded it as akin to blasphemy to affirm that the God of truth, the God “who is truth itself,” has been or can be the author of “error.” By calling its author “truth itself,” the Confession stamps, with the seal of infallibility, whatever the Bible originally contained. If we impugn, as has been done by Dr. Dods, the truthfulness of any of its statements, we make an affirmation inconsistent with the teaching of the Confession that “the author thereof” is “truth itself.”

Implying
infallibility
in all its
parts.

But that is not all. The result of this Divine authorship, of Holy Scripture in all its parts, is indicated with equal clearness by the assertion of the “infallible truth, and Divine authority thereof,” contained in the fifth section of the same chapter. You will be told, no doubt, as we were told in the Court below, that “the infallible truth, and Divine authority,” which are there asserted, are based on ‘the witness of the Spirit;’ and that, therefore, the assertion can be fairly held to apply only to those parts which treat of matters affecting doctrine and duty, inasmuch as to these alone, the witness of the Spirit is directly applicable. But is this the light in which the matter is regarded by the authors of the Confession? Is it not rather that the witness of the Spirit to the infallible truth, and Divine authority of those parts to which alone it is directly applicable, is to be regarded as evidence of the Divine authorship, and consequently, of “the infallible truth, and Divine authority” of the *whole Book to which they belong*,—a Book so unique and marked by such clear and well defined characteristics as one homogeneous whole? I should like to hear some of our friends on the other side attempt to construe the language of the fifth section on any other supposition. Nothing could be plainer, both from the scope of the passage and the words employed, than this, that the witness of the Spirit is adduced as the ultimate ground on which we are to rest for “our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and Divine authority” of *all* Scripture. What other meaning can you assign to the words—“Our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and Divine authority *thereof*”—that is of Holy Scripture *in all its parts*? And that this is the sense, becomes all the

Evidenced
by the wit-
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Spirit.

Dr. Dods
distinctly
denies con-
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clearer, "when we put alongside of it the language employed in the parallel passage of the Larger Catechism. In the answer to the fourth question we read :—"But the Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the Scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the very Word of God." By the witness of the Holy Spirit, say the authors of our Confession, in the Larger Catechism, men are fully persuaded that "*they are (i.e., the several writings of which Holy Scripture is made up), the very Word of God.*" And by the same witness comes, as it is put in the Confession itself, "our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and Divine authority THEREOF," *i.e., of Holy Scripture in all its parts.* Need I say, that all this is utterly inconsistent with the distinct denial by Dr. Dods, in pp. 8, 9, of his Preface, of the fourfold averment of Dr. Hodge, to which I have already referred (see page 25.) There, as I have already shown, Dr. Dods, if his language has any meaning, denies (1st.) that all written under inspiration is the "very Word of God." He denies (2nd.) that all written under inspiration is "of infallible truth." He denies (3rd.) that all written under inspiration is "of Divine authority." He denies (4th.) that "this infallibility and authority attach as well to the verbal expression, in which the revelation is conveyed as to the matter of revelation itself."

Objection
from Con.
I. 8.

But the supporters of Dr. Dods endeavour to neutralize the force of these statements of the Confession, about the Divine authorship, the infallible truth, and the Divine authority of the Scriptures as originally given, by referring to the passage of the Con. I. 8, :—"The Old Testament, in Hebrew, (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was generally known to the nations,) being immediately inspired by God, and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them." Our friends try to make out, that whatever is affirmed in the Confession regarding the Scriptures as originally given, must according to the authors of the Confession, hold good of our present Scriptures, seeing that Holy Scripture is said not only to be of infallible truth and Divine authority as originally given, but also to have been "kept pure in all ages;" and, that, if we admit any impurity in the text, even the most trivial, as introduced through transcription, then our argument from the Confession is vitiated. To this I reply: (1.) That it is matter of history that the authors of the Confession had before them various readings along with the printed text, and so they could not have used the word "pure" as implying that copyists were miraculously preserved from every inaccuracy however slight, in the course of transcription. (2.) They limit the purity, here predicated of our existing Scriptures, by the assertion that follows:—"Are therefore authentical;

so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them;" and, as I have already shown, in page 13, our present Scriptures are, notwithstanding of the various readings of MSS., "pure" in that sense. (3.) The authors of the Confession make perfectly clear in another of their documents, what they mean by the word "pure" in this connection. In *The Practical Use of Saving Knowledge*, under the heading "The evidences of faith," they assert, section 7, "That as God hath had a care of the Scriptures from the beginning, so shall He have a care of them still to the world's end, that there shall not one jot or one tittle of *the substance thereof* be taken away; so saith the text, Matthew v. 18."

I hold the views of Dr. Dods, therefore, to be inconsistent with the Confession of Faith. But even although it had been otherwise, although the doctrine of the Sermon and Preface had not been explicitly condemned by our subordinate Standard, I hold that the Church as "the Pillar and Ground of the Truth," would still be bound to look at their bearing upon her Supreme Standard. I can conceive of a case in which the Confession of a Church might have taken no cognizance of a particular heresy, because it had not been propagated at the time the creed was framed, and yet that the heresy in question might be so directly opposed to the Word of God, and of such a dangerous and unsettling tendency, that the Church might be called upon to add some article to her creed bearing on the subject thus raised for the first time. In point of fact, the Confessions of Faith of the Reformed Churches have reached their present dimensions by meeting new heresies as they arose. Now, as already stated, I do not for a moment admit that this case is not fully met by our Confession of Faith. But even if it had not been so met, if ever there was a case in which, on Scriptural as well as on Confessional grounds, the Church was called upon to give forth no uncertain sound, the present is that case. It touches the very foundation of the Church's existence, and life, and faith, and hope. The views propounded in the Sermon and Preface directly contradict the testimony of Scripture regarding itself. When we make our appeal to the Bible, we find that its writers claim to be the organs of God divinely inspired and infallibly guided in their official work, and assert that in consequence all these writings are in all their parts of infallible truth and divine authority. Old Testament writers in numberless passages assert such a claim for themselves. The claim which these writers make is endorsed by New Testament writers, and by our Lord and His apostles. The miscellaneous writings of the Old Testament existed in our Lord's day in one volume of which throughout God was held to be the Author, and whenever Christ or His apostles alluded to that Book or to any part of it, it is always in language implying in the strongest terms its inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority. The New Testament writers claim

Inconsistent with our Supreme Standard.

With the testimony of our Lord and His Apostles.

for their writings' the same inspiration, and the same infallibility as had been assigned by our Lord and His apostles to the Old Testament writings. We can thus apply, both to the Old and the New Testament, the well known words of Paul, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Nor is that all. The manner in which our Lord and His apostles constantly refer to Holy Scripture shows plainly that they ascribed inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority equally to all the parts of the sacred volume, and to the very words. As Dr. C. Hodge puts it : "Christ and His apostles refer to all parts of the Scriptures, or to the whole Volume, as the Word of God. They make no distinction as to the authority of the Law, the Prophets, or the Hagiographa. . . . Christ and the writers of the New Testament refer to all classes of facts recorded in the Old Testament as infallibly true. Not only doctrinal facts, such as those of the creation and probation of man; his apostasy; the covenant with Abraham; the giving the law upon Mount Sinai; not only great historical facts, as the deluge, the deliverance of the people out of Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, and the like; but incidental circumstances, or facts of apparently minor importance, as, *e.g.* that Satan tempted our first parents in the form of a serpent; that Moses lifted up a serpent in the wilderness; that Elijah healed Naaman, the Syrian, and was sent to the widow in Sarepta, that David ate the shew-bread in the temple, and even that great stumbling-block, that Jonah was three days in the whale's belly, are all referred to by our Lord and His Apostles with the sublime simplicity and confidence with which they are received by little children. . . . Christ and His Apostles argue from the very words of Scripture. Our Lord says that David by the Spirit called the Messiah Lord, *i.e.*, David used the word. It was in the use of a particular word, that Christ said (John x. 35), that the Scripture cannot be broken. 'If he call them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken,' etc. The use of that word, therefore, according to Christ's view of the Scripture, was determined by the Spirit of God." *

This is admitted even by Mr. Horne.

So self-evident, indeed is all this, that even Mr. Horne is constrained to admit that what Dr. Hodge affirms is true, at least, as regards the Apostles. Here is what he says at p. 145 :—"The apostles constantly use the common phrases when quoting the Old Testament. It is to them, as to other Jews peculiarly *ἡ γραφή*, or *αἱ γραφαί*; or *ἁγία γραφή*, an expression which we shall have occasion to notice below. We cannot see that they distinguish one part of these writings, as differing in authority or otherwise, from another part. For anything we can gather from their phraseology they regarded their sacred writings as wholly the direct Word of God." Further on, he says, p. 146, "The arguments of Paul

* Systematic Theology, pp. 163, 164.

are sometimes based on an extreme Jewish theory of literal infallibility; e.g., Gal. iii. 15, 16, he reasons as if the very letters were divinely inspired, and superhumanly preserved: 'Not to seed . . . but . . . to thy seed,' etc."

How then, does Mr. Horne get over such clear testimony of the Apostles? Simply by affirming that they were uncritical blunderers, who "held the doctrinal view of the Old Testament writings current in their time, as they held certain doctrinal views in philosophy. On none of these points," he adds, "do I think we can say that they were men 'raised above their time,' nor does this appear to me a view of New Testament authors in the least derogatory to them. A Christian of the present day, who fully believes and feels that he has the power of spiritual discernment promised him by Christ, does not imagine that, on scientific ground, he has an insight wholly unlike that of contemporaries who pretend to no such enlightenment." * Is this one of the so-called "popular fallacies" referred to by Dr. Dods, as existing in the minds of those who contributed to the Scriptures? † Is it an illustration of their "speaking in that whole region of thought in which their contemporaries moved"? Farther on, Mr. Horne says, "These writers (*i.e.*, those of the New Testament) accepted very much the popular theory of their time, modified as has been already stated. It is quite evident, from our previous remarks, what their views in general of the Old Testament Scriptures were; *but it is not so evident that their views must be ours. We know that in every case it is simply impossible for their views and ours to coincide.*" ‡ Is it to this that Dr. Dods refers when he says, "I will not deny that his (Paul's) style is often awkward, nor that his ideas and modes of argument are strangely out of harmony with our modes of thought?" § If so, he afterwards expresses himself rather more cautiously than Mr. Horne. While Dr. Dods would "remember that it is somewhat dangerous to differ from a man who could see what Paul saw, who had one of the world's hugest tasks to perform, and who performed it;" Mr. Horne goes on to say, "We practically set aside their view of the Old Testament when we institute historical inquiries in regard to its origin, &c.; *and in this way, the question of how far the examples of the apostles, in their interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies, for instance, and their manner of dealing with its narratives, is to be followed by us, remains an open one.*" ||

But he rejects the teaching of the Apostles on this subject.

This is an intelligible method of getting rid of the testimony of the Apostles as to the Old Testament Scriptures. But I ask, Is it the method which this Church is prepared to sanction? I press this question,

* Horne's Reason and Revelation, pp. 144, 145. † Sermon, p. 18.

‡ Horne's Reason and Revelation, p. 161. The italics are mine.

§ Sermon, p. 24.

|| Horne's Reason and Revelation, p. 161. The italics are mine.

Which involves the rejection also of Christ's teaching and of His infallibility.

for it is one that effects not merely the trustworthiness of the Apostles, but also of our blessed Lord Himself. If the Apostles erred on this matter, so also did their Divine Master. Whatever Mr. Horne tries to prove to the contrary, it is plain, to any unbiassed reader of Scripture, that He held the very same view of the inspiration and infallibility of the Old Testament Scriptures, as did His inspired Apostles. What they taught on this question, He also taught. If, therefore, they erred, He erred. And if, on such a question as this, He erred, how can He be trusted on any other question? How can He be Divine and infallible? It almost makes one's blood run cold to face this, as the logical outcome of the views laid down in the Sermon and Preface, and I know that, if Dr. Dods for a moment supposed that, by adopting these views, he was shut up to such a conclusion, he would instantly renounce them as most dangerous. For my part, however, I cannot see how, as the matter is put in our present Scriptures, such a conclusion can be avoided. That, I may say, is the main reason why I take so serious a view of the nature, the issues, and the tendencies of the teaching of the Sermon and Preface. We hear loud talk in certain quarters against our so-called Bibliolatry, and we are told that, as we Protestants have already got rid of an infallible Pope, so the time has now come for us to get rid also of an infallible Book. For myself, I cannot see how this can be done, without our getting rid, at the same time, of an infallible Christ; to find that nothing infallible remains to us, unless perhaps it be an infallible self.

A broad or a narrow Church.

We have been accused of seeking to narrow this Free Church of ours, and have been represented as wishing to exclude from it men of the type of Dr. Dods. I repel, with indignation, all such insinuations. Any reference to a judicial process has, so far as I know, been made exclusively by those at the other side of the bar, and has been used by them, as an *in terrorem* argument to prevent the Church from faithfully declaring her mind, in regard to the unscriptural and dangerous character of the views promulgated by Dr. Dods in his Sermon and Preface. I believe that the Church of Christ ought to embrace within her pale men of all kinds of gifts and graces, and fitted for all kinds of service. But here the question is not about variety of gifts and ministries, but about *variety of doctrine* on a question so fundamental as that of the inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority of Holy Scripture. Is our Church prepared for a breadth of that kind? If so, then I am afraid she will soon become *narrow enough* in other respects. The state of things in Germany at the present day,—the practical estrangement of the masses of the population from public ordinances—not more than three per cent of the male population being in connection with the Christian Church,—should make any Church take warning as to what will be the inevitable result of loose views as to the inspiration, infallible

truth, and divine authority of Holy Scripture. It has hitherto been the glory of our Free Church that she has been loyal to the Bible in all its parts, as the unerring record of the will of her Great King and Head. If henceforth she is to occupy a different relation to the Scriptures, we may well exclaim, "I-chabod, I-chabod;" for the glory will have departed. I leave our case in the hands of the Synod, in the confident persuasion that among its members, there is such regard for the authority of the Word of God, and of the God of the Word, that our complaint will be sustained; the judgment of the Presbytery reversed; the views of the Sermon and Preface condemned as contrary to the Standards; and the case otherwise disposed of according to the laws of the Church.

APPENDIX.

The three Motions, submitted to the Synod, and voted on, were the following:—

1st, Mr. Laughton's, in these terms—

"The Synod sustain the Complaint in so far as the deliverance of the Presbytery commits all who concur in it to the approval of the Committee's Report; but, at the same time, they find it unnecessary to give any judgment on the Report itself or on anything contained in it. The Synod disapprove of the Sermon and Preface in question as open to grave objection in respect of statements and reasonings which seem to limit the sphere and lower the idea of inspiration, and as giving rise to serious misapprehension as to the author's real meaning; but considering the explanations he has given, and, further, that he has agreed not to continue the publication of the Sermon and Preface, find that there is no reason for taking further steps in the matter. But in giving this deliverance, the Synod do not admit any understanding that the views objected to in this publication are to be tolerated in future,"

Mr. Laughton's motion

2nd, Mr. M'Crie's, in these terms—

"The Synod dismiss the Complaint and sustain the judgment of the Presbytery."

Mr. M'Crie's motion.

3rd, Mr. Sturrock's, in these terms—

"The Synod sustain the Complaint in so far as it takes exception to the Report approved of by the Presbytery as not being a full

Mr. Sturrock's motion.

representation of the dangerous character of the views set forth in the Sermon and Preface reported on, especially in not with sufficient emphasis condemning the view that there are errors in the Scriptures as originally given; and the Synod, moreover, take this opportunity of affirming the doctrine which was endangered by said Sermon, and which is contained in the Standards of the Church, namely, the infallibility and divine authority of Holy Scripture; and further, having learned from the bar, that the Sermon is now withdrawn, the Synod are of opinion that the case should here take end."

In the first division, 19 voted for Mr. M'Crie's motion, and 33 for Mr. Sturrock's; in the second division, 21 voted for Mr. Laughton's motion, 31 for Mr. Sturrock's. Mr. Sturrock's motion was accordingly declared carried.

Against this judgment, certain members of Synod dissented and complained.

The Commissioners of the Presbytery also protested and appealed; as did Mr. Evan Gordon in his own name, and in the name of those who might adhere to him. Messrs. Nicoll, M'Intosh, and Howie, intimated their acquiescence in the judgment.

At a Special Meeting of the Presbytery of Glasgow, held on 17th April, the following resolution was, on the motion of Dr. Adam, adopted by the majority,—(the minority not considering themselves at liberty to take part in the proceedings):—

"The Presbytery, while regarding the motion carried in the Synod as unsatisfactory, both in its own nature, and in respect of the circumstances under which it was adopted, yet considering—first, that the only part of the Presbytery's decision affected by it is that relating to the approval of the committee's report, and that as regards it none of the principles or conclusions which the report embodies is called in question, but only the fulness of its representation in one direction, and the sufficiency of its emphasis in another: considering, secondly, that the proposed issue in both findings is exactly the same, viz., that no further action should be taken in the case, and that this issue on the Synod's part is connected with the withdrawal of the sermon (a step which was recommended by the Presbytery, and brought about by its decision): and considering, finally, how desirable it is that the approaching General Assembly should, if at all possible, be relieved of the necessity of dealing with the case—and seeking to contribute on their part to the desirable result, the Presbytery find that they can and should abstain from prosecuting an appeal to the General Assembly, and they hereby resolve accordingly."

On 20th April, the following statement appeared in the newspapers, prepared by those of the complainants against the judgment of the Presbytery who now acquiesce in the judgment of the Synod, and who had an opportunity of consulting together:—

"In consequence of the extraordinary representation as to the nature and effect of the decision of the Free Synod of Glasgow and Ayr in the case of Dr. Dods, given by the Glasgow Free Presbytery in their reasons for not prosecuting the appeal taken by their commissioners against that decision, we, the undersigned, deem it necessary to explain why we have acquiesced in the decision of the Synod, while formerly we felt it to be our duty to dissent from and complain against the decision of the Presbytery. We are not insensible to the manifest defects, in minor details, of the decision of the Synod. We regard it, for instance, as defective in that, although doubtless intended to have such an effect, and substantially doing so, it does not formally reverse the judgment of the Presbytery. We also regret that, in describing the relation of the sermon and preface of Dr. Dods to the Standards, the vague word "endangered" is used instead of some more definite expression. We believe further that, before assuming that the sermon and preface are now withdrawn, it was due to Dr. Dods that he should have had an opportunity of stating whether—in view of the emphatic condemnation by the Synod on the ground of the Standards of the views set forth in his sermon and preface—he still adhered to the withdrawal, which, as appears from his letter to the Presbytery, was made only "in deference to the Presbytery's opinion, that the publication of these views has been ill-advised in form and time," and "on the distinct understanding" that these views are to be tolerated within the Church, and are not condemned by the Confession." On these grounds, we trust that if, by any party the judgment of the Synod is brought under the review of the General Assembly these defects will be remedied, and that the rather because of the misleading representation now given by the Presbytery as to its true meaning and import. Had we considered that representation to be just, we would certainly have insisted upon a formal, as we have already got a substantial, reversal of the whole decision. We have acquiesced, however, for the following reasons:—

1st, Because the decision of the Synod "sustains the Complaint in so far as it takes exception to the Report approved of by the Presbytery as not being a full representation of the dangerous character of the views set forth in the Sermon and Preface reported on, especially in not with sufficient emphasis condemning the view that there are errors in the Scriptures as originally given."

2nd, Because, instead of its being true, as asserted by the Presbytery, "that the only part of the Presbytery's decision affected by it (the Synod's decision) is that relating to the approval of the Committee's Report," the whole of the Presbytery's decision is not only affected but overturned, and especially its most essential part, which "finds that the sermon of Dr. Dods is open to grave objection, in the respects and on the grounds specified in the Report." Even on the Presbytery's

admission that their approval of the Report is condemned, the whole of their decision is necessarily condemned, inasmuch as it is explicitly founded on, limited by, and largely expressed in, the language of the Report, and declared to be "in accordance with the conclusions of it."

3rd, Because the decision of the Synod is plainly and unambiguously a condemnation of the *views* of the Sermon and Preface, and in that respect is unlike the decision of the Presbytery, which, as expounded by its leading supporters and understood by Dr. Dods, condemned not the views but simply the "manner" or "form" in which these views are expressed.

4th, Because the decision of the Synod not only condemns, but condemns with emphasis, "the view that there are errors in the Scriptures as originally given," thus presenting a striking contrast to the Report approved of by the Presbytery, which not only apologizes for that view, but vindicates Dr. Dods in holding and publishing it by declaring that it is "one which has been held and advocated by theologians of the highest authority, of world-wide reputation for orthodoxy, not less than for ability and learning."

5th, Because the decision of the Synod, unlike that of the Presbytery, is explicitly based upon the Standards of the Church, and is in that respect all the more satisfactory, because the two other motions proposed, but rejected, evaded any reference to the Standards.

6th, Because the doctrine of the infallibility and Divine authority of Holy Scripture, in the sense in which it had been endangered by the decision of the Presbytery, has been affirmed by that of the Synod, and has been declared to be "contained in the Standards of the Church."

7th, Because the decision of the Synod, notwithstanding of its defects in form, is plainly intended to prohibit not only Dr. Dods but every Office-bearer of the Church from publishing, preaching, or holding such views as are promulgated in the Sermon and Preface; whereas the decision of the Presbytery, and the letter of Dr. Dods engrossed without any disclaimer on the records of the Presbytery, imply that any minister of the Church may, without challenge, not only hold, but also preach and publish such views.

8th, Because while, as alleged by the Presbytery, "the proposed issue in both findings is exactly the same—viz., that no further action should be taken in the case"—the judgment of the Synod on that point was declared after the views contained in the Sermon and Preface had been explicitly condemned on the ground of the Standards, and after the Sermon and Preface had been, in point of fact, withdrawn, and expressly on the ground of said withdrawal; while that of the Presbytery was declared after the views were virtually sanctioned, and when no assurance whatever was given that Dr. Dods would concur with the Presbytery as to the "desirableness" of withdrawing the Sermon and Preface.

9th, Because, after the decision of the Synod, the continued withdrawal of the Sermon and Preface by Dr. Dods can only be understood as meaning that he now acquiesces in the condemnation thus passed on his views as endangering the doctrine of the Standards."

Robert Howie, James Nicoll, John Riddell, R. M. Thornton, Hugh M'Intosh, William Scott, *Ministers*.

The following reasons of protest and appeal appeared in the Newspapers of April 23 :—

"We, the undersigned, while acquiescing in the judgment of the Synod, on the 10th inst., in the Rev. Dr. Dods' case, so far as it homologates our reasons of dissent and complaint, nevertheless feel constrained to protest and appeal to the General Assembly against said judgment, for following reasons and others to be pled at the bar of the Assembly :—

1st, Because the Synod do not *reverse* the judgment of the Presbytery complained of, and so indirectly affirm that judgment in respect of everything in it not actually specified in the Synod's judgment.

2nd, Because the Synod give no deliverance either upon our complaint against the judgment of the Presbytery in reference to the Sermon and Preface set forth in our second reason of dissent, or upon our complaint against the way in which the Presbytery proposed to deal with the author in regard to the withdrawal of said Sermon and Preface, as set forth in our third reason of dissent.

3rd, Because the Synod, while reaffirming the doctrine of our Standards on the infallibility and Divine authority of Holy Scripture, do not declare the views of Dr. Dods on these and other points, as set forth in our second reason, to be contrary to or inconsistent with these Standards, and so leave it doubtful as to whether they regard them in that light or not.

4th, Because the Synod do not censure the publication of the views called in question, and prohibit the publication of them under any *form*, but hold the Sermon and Preface as withdrawn, although it had been denied from the bar, that the publications could be so regarded, seeing the understanding and express ground on which the author had expressed his willingness to withdraw them, had been, however, unwarrantably repudiated by the Presbytery in their answers to our reasons of dissent and complaint.

5th, Because the Synod do not instruct the Presbytery to confer with Dr. Dods in regard to the unscriptural and dangerous character of the views contained in his Sermon, with a view to his renunciation of them, or even suggest the necessity or propriety of such brotherly dealing.

Lastly, Because, not having reversed the judgment of the Presbytery, the Synod have indirectly, however unintentionally, admitted the right of Dr. Dods, or any other minister of this Church, as set forth in our fourth reason of dissent and complaint, to hold, preach,

and publish the views contained in the Sermon and Preface in question."

Evan Gordon, Robert Bremner, Andrew A. Bonar, Robert Gault, D. M'Meikan, Hugh M'Dougall, Henry Anderson, R. C. Smith, Alex. Urquhart, William Tullo, George Campbell, Alex. Murchison, John Stewart, James Fordyce, William Jeffrey, *Ministers*; James Robertson, Robert M'Callum, Malcolm M'Grigor, Allan Munro, Thomas Macklin, William Beith, Thomas Lawrie, William C. Morton, Robert Marshall, Donald Macpherson, John Buchanan, Duncan M'Callum, James Allan, *Elders*.

It will thus be seen that of the 47, (viz., 29 ministers and 18 elders,) who complained against the judgment of the Presbytery, 28 (viz., 15 ministers and 13 elders,) have appealed against the judgment of the Synod. The names of those who have acquiesced in the judgment of the Synod are the following:— James Nicoll, G. L. Campbell, John F. M'Gregor, A. C. Fullarton, Hugh M'Intosh, John Riddell, Alexander Andrew, R. M. Thornton, James Stuart, J. Smith, James Drysdale, G. W. Cumming, William Scott, Robert Howie, *Ministers*; and H. M'Kinnon, James Donald, George Munro, William Morton, John Wands, *Elders*.



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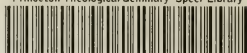


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